

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ESSEX

Supporting the Essex Record Office

Registered Charity No. 235270

Minutes of the 66th Annual General Meeting held at Prittlewell Priory, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea at 11 a.m. on Saturday 6th July 2019

The Chairman, Dr Christopher Thornton, welcomed everyone to the AGM. The President, Lord Petre, then took the chair.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from 21 members, whose names are shown on the last page of these minutes.

2. Minutes of the 65th AGM held at Brentwood School on 7th July 2018

There were no corrections to the minutes of the 65th AGM. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Lynn Marston and seconded by Sarah Ensor. All agreed. The minutes were signed by Lord Petre as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Annual Report and Address by the Chairman for the year ended 31st March 2019

The full annual report had been circulated with the agenda and other AGM papers. Dr Thornton highlighted the following activities of FHE:

- Financial support for the acquisition of numerous documents and photographs by ERO
- A thank-you lunch event for ERO volunteers
- Two newsletters sent to members
- Financial support for a University of Essex student intern at ERO
- The Essex Great War Archive Project- fundraising quiz, and talks at ERO for the end of the centenary project
- New FHE membership leaflet
- Institutional membership of the Archives and Records Association and the Friends of the National Libraries (two grants already received from FNL)

The Chairman thanked the officers and committee members for their support and hard work.

Stan Newens mentioned the inadequate car parking at ERO (one space is owned by Chelmsford Borough Council, not Essex County Council). He said the Essex Society for Archaeology and History have asked about this but received no reply. The Chairman said Martin Astell would address this in his report to the AGM. Lesley

Vingoe, an ERO volunteer, thanked FHE for the lunch event. She said volunteers would appreciate having name badges, especially when working in the searchroom. The Chairman agreed this seemed a good idea.

Acceptance of the Chairman's report was agreed unanimously.

5. Appointment of Examiner for year ended 31st March 2020

Geraldine Willden has agreed to examine the accounts again next year. This appointment was agreed unanimously.

6. Financial statement for the year ended 31st March 2019

The balance sheet and income and expenditure report had been circulated before the meeting. The Treasurer reported that the balance is £60,519. Funds have been reorganized with some money moved into a CAF one-year deposit account. The annual income of £11,484 includes a legacy of £3,000. Events included the quiz and conference. Income from subscriptions has risen due to an increase in membership and collection of unpaid subscriptions. Expenditure was £8,043. Surplus for the year was £3,441.

Acceptance of the financial statement was proposed by Ruth Earnshaw and seconded by David Morgan. This was agreed unanimously.

7. Election of Honorary Officers under Rule 4 of the Constitution

Honorary Officers standing for re-election: Chairman, Dr Christopher Thornton; Vice-Chairman, Ken Crowe; Hon. Secretary, Jenny Butler; Hon. Treasurer, Ruth Earnshaw; Hon. Publications Secretary, Martyn Lockwood; Hon. Membership Secretary, Janice Gooch. Lord Petre proposed that they should be elected en bloc. Their election was agreed unanimously.

8. Appointment of Executive Committee under Rule 5 of the Constitution

Standing for re-election as Committee members: Alison Rowlands, Jane Bedford, Sarah Ensor, Sean O'Dell. Lord Petre proposed that they should be elected en bloc. Their election was agreed unanimously.

Neil Wiffen had been co-opted to the Committee during the year. His election was agreed unanimously.

9. Statement by an Essex Record Office representative

Dr Thornton welcomed Martin Astell, Essex Record Office Manager. In his statement Martin reported that:

- ERO has gained accreditation from The National Archives.
- ERO has entered into an arrangement with Ancestry whereby surnames in Essex parish registers have been indexed and linked to images on Essex Archives Online. Thanks are due to Chris Lambert, archivist leading on digitization.

- Records from an external group, the Sainsbury Archive, have been digitized for their 150th anniversary (unfortunately the article in the ARA newsletter doesn't mention ERO).
- ERO has given professional support (sorting, cataloguing, digitization) to the Mercury Voices project in Colchester.
- ERO's library collection is now on Essex Archives Online. 6,000 titles approximately are now on the system. Thanks are due to the volunteers, who are continuing to work on the pamphlets.
- Volunteers have cleaned and flattened 6,731 Chancellor architectural plans. Volunteers have also been working on Ordnance Survey National Grid maps, settlement papers, and building plans. There is also a volunteer in the Sound and Video Archive working on the collection of Chris Bard, former BBC Essex presenter.
- ERO received support from the Essex Gardens Trust for the conservation of the Repton drawing of Rivenhall Place.
- Julie Miller, an Essex University student on a placement in ERO, has made a transcript of John Farmer's journal in New England, Scotland and Ireland, and created an itinerary of his travels and a blog post.
- Essex Sound and Video Archive has published a series of interviews from the Windrush generation on the europeana.eu website. ESVA also has oral history recordings and transcripts made for the "You can't beat a woman" project with Colchester Women's Refuge. The BBC has asked for some of these for a future programme.
- The Essex History Group talks continue to be very popular. The joint conference with FHE in May "Essex on the Edge" was a success. Neil Wiffen is working on a conference on the history of science in March 2020.
- There are plans for a project dealing with the large collection of Marconi glass plates. They came to ERO in about 2004 and are still almost inaccessible. This will feed into the 2020 Essex Year of Science and Creativity. It is hoped that a Fellowship will be appointed for this project.
- ERO will re-publish *The Great Tide* 50 years after its first publication. In response to a question from Maureen Scollan, Martin said they are working on permissions for images, including the painting on the front cover.
- Permission has been granted by Chelmsford Borough Council to use the gravel area by the side of ERO for parking for one-off events. More housing and a new road will be built on the gasworks site.

In response to questions Martin said:

- ERO reorganization has still not finished. The new Archive and Professional Services Lead, who will manage the archivists, conservation, and digitization studio, is starting on 15th July. Organising of events has been taken on by the Customer Service team, and that seems to be working well. He is pleased so far with the high quality of work of the ERO team.
- An Essex History Group talk in February will relate to the 1953 floods.
- Access to the present disabled parking spaces will change, and the ERO frontage will be re-landscaped to include disabled spaces.

- There are ongoing talks about transport in the area. Chelmsford Borough Council are happy to have walking and cycling routes, but not so happy about cars and buses.
- Access for fire engines will remain.

10. Resolutions proposed by members of the Friends

No resolutions were received.

Apologies for absence

Angela Clarke, Bronwen Cook, Mike Davies, Karen Dennis, Steve Dennis, Mike Durgan, Susan Eve, Tony Eve, Tony Gunn, Anne Kemp-Luck, Dorothy Lockwood, Martyn Lockwood, Patricia March, Margaret Martin, Norma Newsome, Meryl Rawlings (ESFH), Springfield Parish Council, Hilary Taylor, Nicola Thomas, Brenda Watkin, Elphin Watkin (21)

Attendance at AGM

Martin Astell, Jane Bedford, Tony Bedford, Jenny Butler, Ken Crowe, Tony Doe, Shirley Durgan, Ruth Earnshaw, Herbert Eiden, Sarah Ensor, Janice Gooch, Sue Howlett, Ron Howlett, Lynn Marston, David Morgan, Sandra Newens, Stan Newens, Thomas Newens, Lord Petre, Alison Rowlands, Lesley Ruse, Derrick Ruse, Maureen Scollan, Stewart Seymour, Christopher Thornton, Lesley Vingoe, Jennifer Ward (27)

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20th July 2019